

## REMARKS

Applicant appreciates the thorough examination of the present application as evidenced by the Final Office Action mailed August 29, 2006 (hereinafter "Office Action"). Applicants particularly appreciate the indication that Claims 21-30 and 51-70 are allowed, and that Claims 46-50 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the recitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. In order to place the present application in condition for immediate allowance, Claims 31-45 have been cancelled, and Claim 46 has been amended to include the recitations of 31 from which it formerly depended. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that the present application is in condition for allowance.

## CONCLUSION

In light of the above remarks, Applicants respectfully submit that the above-entitled application is now in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration of this application, as amended, is respectfully requested. If, in the opinion of the Examiner, a telephonic conference would expedite the examination of this matter, the Examiner is invited to call the undersigned attorney at (919) 854-1400.

Respectfully submitted,

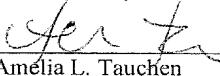


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## CERTIFICATION OF ELECTRONIC TRANSMISSION

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being transmitted electronically to the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office on December 22, 2006 using the EFS.

  
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